

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: Urban Design Committee

DATE, TIME AND

PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, June 4, 2003, 3:00 p.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 2nd Floor, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members: Michael Eckert, JoAnne Kissel, Third World Oforah, Dennis Scheer, Gordon Scholz, Scott Sullivan, Kim Todd

Others: Dallas McGee (Urban Development); Mike Bott (Michael S. Bott & Assoc.); David Livingston, Debby Brehm, and John Decker (Douglas Theatre Co.); Trevor Hull and Dave Erickson (Erickson Sullivan Architects); Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

STATED PURPOSE

OF THE MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Urban Design Committee

Mr. Scheer called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m. Mr. Scheer noted that agenda item 3, *Antelope Valley landscaping (Parks & Recreation)* will be postponed until the next meeting.

Approval of meeting notes, May 7, 2003

Mr. Scholz noted a change in the May 7th minutes on page 2 with the following sentence, "Mr. McGee stated that they have asked Mr. Sullivan and David Livingston to start working with Michael Bott."; Livingston should be changed to Erickson. Ms. Kissel moved to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2003 meeting minutes; Mr. Scholz seconded.

Motion for approval carried 7-0. Kissel, Scholz, Scheer, Todd, Eckert, Sullivan and Oforah voting 'yes'.

Downtown Entertainment Center: Urban Design Goals, Schedule, Design Progress

Mr. McGee proceeded to review the background of the Downtown Entertainment Center project. He stated that the redevelopment agreement was approved in March of this year. The agreement includes reference to a conceptual plan that he presented at the last meeting. The developer will be responsible for 12-14 movie theaters, possibly a game room, 2600-3200 seats, and a concession stand. It shows one entrance into the facility on P Street with a dropoff lane in front of P Street, and fire exits. Mr. McGee noted that the redevelopment agreement identifies the Urban Design Committee as the body that makes recommendations in respect to urban design aspects of the entertainment center. Two public informational meetings have been scheduled for public input. The first one is June 12th. They are asking that this Committee have a special meeting on June 19th. The second public meeting will be June 25th. Then they would like to meet with this Committee again on July 2nd, at which time they would like to get recommendations from this Committee.

Mr. McGee then presented the original design drawings that were in the redevelopment agreement. Mr. Bott clarified that the drawings are actually a refinement of the drawings in the redevelopment agreement. Mr. Sullivan noted that they felt it was important to address the urban form and think about the facade

and having a strong edge around various city blocks. They also felt it needed to express some excitement, some unique qualities and forward thinking in terms of the elements. They wanted to create some articulation. In terms of the building form, the red brick portion of the building is intended to be the facade that sits at the property line and establishes the traditional urban edge. From that point, the forms try to express the spirit of an entertainment complex. They are trying to create a contrast of interest between a traditional material versus some of the other materials that create that articulation in form, color and relation to the property line. They want to create some honesty about what is happening behind the wall and to give some indication of the inside function.

One of the elements is a major sign at the main entrance, which is intended to be some type of vertical element that is projected out to the property line. There is also the notion of the entrance having as much glass as possible, creating the canopy for shelter, and the variety of materials. From the Livingstons' perspective on P street, there is a desire to have display boxes for their movie posters. One of the goals is to address the corners. There is a large vertical window that is intended for the theater's use for permanent displays. They have also incorporated a planter seat to address the P Street corners. The 11th Street facade is generally broken into three forms. They also talked about introducing low-maintenance planters against the walls. One of the issues on O Street is the sign above the exit door, and a goal is to avoid that. The exitway is actually recessed from the right-of-way and they have eliminated the signage above the exitway, and introduced the ability to put four vertical sign elements. They are intended to be very large scale. Mars Bar has an interest in doing a sidewalk café. They would like to see that as a way to add life to the facade. Lastly, on the 12th Street facade, which is the art corridor, they would like to incorporate some public art.

Mr. Sullivan continued by noting that the inherent materials downtown are brick, stone, limestone, and cast concrete. The most contemporary materials they are introducing are metal panels. They feel that there are some mainstay materials of downtown that are critical, but they also feel that it deserves to receive some more lively materials to create an entertainment concept. They also feel that can create a more festive atmosphere through the use of color. Awnings are also an opportunity for color. They are also proposing to do some uplighting.

Because of the timing of the theater project, there is a desire to use precast concrete panels. The thought is that there is a base concrete wall, and the images are stud framed elements projecting inward or outward from that main structure. The structure would be sheathed in brick veneer or concrete panels. In terms of the canted metal forms, those are more dynamic and an opportunity to bring in some color.

In respect to the canopies, they are not attempting to provide full canopy coverage, but rather they are trying to provide a variety of it. They are varying the depths.

Mr. Oforah stated that the drawing is very nice, but asked why the facades are broken up so much. Mr. Sullivan stated that walking by 300 feet of continuous facade is not interesting. There has to be an interest to it and depth. Mr. Oforah noted that he likes the concept, but feels that the current drawing is broken up a little too much. He likes the idea of all the different textures that are applied to the building. Mr. Sullivan commented that downtown is designed incrementally and very seldom does one block get developed with the same use. Mr. Scheer asked if the exterior increments relate specifically to the interior size of a room. Mr. Sullivan responded that, as best as possible, they do. Mr. Scheer stated that he believes that honesty in expressing itself on the exterior is very important and commended the architects for that effort. Mr. Oforah commented that he agrees with Mr. Scheer in hearing of the layout. He stated that parents could reference which exit their children could use if they pick them up after the

movie.

Mr. Scheer asked if there is clear glass on the P Street side. Mr. Sullivan stated that they are proposing no blacked out glass. Mr. Scheer then asked about O Street. Mr. Sullivan stated that they are still in discussions regarding that, but they are trying to avoid blacked out glass.

Mr. Sullivan noted that one of the concerns with the O Street side was the large sign at the exit. Mr. Scheer stated that he believes that however we can get life and activity on the O Street side has to happen. Otherwise the buildings will be dead. Ms. Kissel stated that she is delighted with the current drawings. Mr. Scholz stated that the O Street facade is the issue that bothers him most in terms of the interaction with the building and the level of deception. It is his understanding that the parking that will be utilized is the Centrum, which will be a source of frustration to have to walk around to P Street. Mr. McGee confirmed that the Centrum is the parking for the theater as it is the least utilized. He added that parking will be free to patrons of the theater after 7:00 p.m. Mr. Livingston stated that wherever people park, they will honor their parking. He also noted that at the corners of 12th and O and 11th and O, there will be a large sign that will make it clear where the entrance is. Mr. Scheer asked if there was a way to have some bench seating in order to create that sidewalk café atmosphere. Mr. Erickson stated that they are optimistic that the sidewalk café atmosphere will work to create that liveliness. Mr. Scheer also questioned if that could be identified as the place for sidewalk vendors or minstrels. Mr. Livingston stated that they do not want to get too aggressive of vendors, as the number one concern among attendees is safety and security, and they do not want to feel that they are being harassed. Mr. Decker noted the locations would have to be strategically placed, because the higher concentration of activity in a specific area there is, safety concerns increase. Mr. Livingston stated that they want to make O Street as inviting and exciting as possible. Mr. Scheer noted that there is a conflict here, as activity is good from an urban design perspective, but to them, some of that activity is bad. Mr. Decker stated that bad is not necessarily the word that he would use, but the activity just has to be managed.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the alley that goes to 12th Street is an exitway for three theaters. Their intention is to create some streetscape with a combination of lighting and a canopy concept. There is a concern with the ability to upkeep the planter boxes as well as having staff to maintain them. There is some discussion with the Downtown Lincoln Association in terms of maintenance. Mr. Scheer noted that although we can design something that is easy to maintain, but they may not look the way that you want them to. Mr. Zimmer asked if there are bench opportunities with the planters. Mr. Sullivan responded that there is.

In regard to the dropoff, Ms. Kissel stated that the dropoff takes a lot of right-of-way for a lot of cars, and she does not understand the need for this big of a dropoff. Ms. Brehm stated that it is better for the flow of traffic to have two lanes as people drop their child off and park their car to walk their child to the building and buy a ticket. Mr. Zimmer questioned if the island helps or hurts you. It does give separation, but if there was no island, in theory every stall would be in and out. Mr. Livingston stated that it is a customer perception of safety with that separation. He acknowledged that there may be other ways to provide that safety. Mr. Eckert suggested having two separate dropoff lanes. Mr. Scheer noted that he feels that the drop-off lane shown is not an appropriate solution for an urban setting. He suggested that they keep looking at other options. It troubles him that this works against the "Marketplace" rules. Ms. Brehm stated that an issue is getting people to come downtown, and they feel that this is something their customers will appreciate. Mr. Oforah noted that Randy Peters of the Department of Roads has indicated that the dropoff will help the traffic flow. Mr. Oforah feels that the dropoff is good. Ms. Kissel stated that she is not against the dropoff in concept, but she feels there are too many negatives for a fairly small positive. Mr. Sullivan stated that they will continue the dialogue regarding this issue.

Mr. Scholz asked if the budget will allow for these facades. Mr. Sullivan stated that they have not gotten to the point of pricing it out, but that is a concern. Mr. McGee stated that the City is contributing \$370,000 to the exterior of the building, but at this point, they do not know what that will provide. Mr. Scholz noted that his concern is that we don't end up with the concrete shell due to budget constraints. Mr. Eckert stated that this is a great improvement. He recommended that some budget numbers be drafted.

Mr. Erickson commented that the exit from the theater is not directly across from the parking entrance, and questioned if there would be people crossing the street mid-block. Mr. Decker commented that the streetscape could help with that problem.

Mr. Livingston stated that the architects have been very responsive. There is a fine line between aesthetics, function and maintenance, and they have listened to their concerns.

Mr. McGee stated that they would like the Committee to meet in two weeks. The meeting was confirmed for Thursday, June 19th at 3:00.

Staff report/miscellaneous

Mr. Zimmer stated that Italian Ice has asked to have a vending cart. The biggest challenge with the carts is that they are basically a mini kitchen and have to meet health codes. He asked for a nod from the Committee to proceed with this, and such was received.

Mr. Zimmer also stated that the Committee has been invited by the Department of Roads to participate in design enhancements on the Homestead Expressway/Capitol Parkway West interchange, and he has volunteered to consult with them.

Mr. Scheer adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.